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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN RESPONSE TO U.S. DEMARCHE ON NPT PREPCOM

REF: STATE 54147

¶1. EconPolOff met on 25 April with Alexander Marschik, Deputy of the Foreign Ministry's office for arms control and nuclear nonproliferation. Marschik said he has been in touch with Christopher Ford, the U.S. Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation, and knows the U.S. position on the upcoming PrepCom I conference well. Marschik also met previously with Ambassador Bolton in New York to discuss the conference.

¶2. Austria plans to play an active role during the PrepCom I conference. According to Marschik, Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik will give opening remarks and express the GoA's gratitude for agreement to hold the conference in Vienna. She will probably also appeal to the NPT parties to agree on proposals to build confidence in the treaty. The EU, Marschik added, is still trying to decide what, if any, position papers it will release at the PrepCom.

¶3. Marschik noted that the U.S. has adopted a more "welcoming approach" to the NPT process and added that this is the direction the NPT parties need to go. Marschik said he was optimistic that the Vienna PrepCom conference would have a good start and allow the parties to begin discussing the substantive issues.

McCaw